FINDING HOPE

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

• A Guide to Help & Support in the WHSCT Area •

Welcome to the **Western Trust Recovery College** Resource Book, which has been compiled by professionals and those who have lived through the various symptoms and experiences described in this book. It can often be a challenge to know where to turn to when you are going through a difficult time so we have complied this handy guide to some of the services and supports in the Western Trust area. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, we do hope that it will be a good starting point and prove to beneficial to everyone – from those who use services, to staff, carers, students, families and friends.

Olive Young

WHSCT Recovery College Co-ordinator

The **Recovery College** gratefully acknowledges the contributions of everyone who shared their own personal and professional experiences for the benefit of this book, the dedicated work of the Co-production Committee and the Public Health Agency who generously funded the project.

Thank you

From everybody at the WHSCT Recovery College

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ADDICTION

The NHS defines addiction as not having control over doing, taking or using something to the point where it could be harmful to you.

Addiction is most commonly associated with gambling, drugs, alcohol and nicotine, but it's possible to be addicted to just about anything. The strain of managing an addiction can seriously damage your work life and relationships, and in the case of substance abuse (for example, drugs and alcohol), an addiction can have serious psychological and physical effects. However, addiction is a treatable condition and there are lots of ways you can seek help.

INFORMATION

• **Alcohol and You** has information to help you to make decisions about your alcohol use - *www.alcoholandyouni.com*

• **Drink Wise, Age Well** provide support, advice and free, easy to access services for people who work with, support or care for anyone over 50 who has an issue with alcohol. Telephone (Fermanagh) 02866 381714, (Foyle) 02871 160236, (Omagh) 02882 839240 –*www.drinkwiseagewell.org.uk*

• **FRANK** - A to Z list of substances, effects, chances of getting hooked, health risks and UK law. Also includes information on peer pressure – *www.talktofrank.com*

• **Know Your Limits** – Information on how alcohol can affect your body, from the Public Health Agency - *www.knowyourlimits.info*

• **NHS Choices** provides up to date information on all types of addiction and advice and support on how to overcome addictions - *www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Addiction/Pages/addictionhome.aspx*

• **NI Drugs and Alcohol** - information on statutory and voluntary services in the Western Trust area - *www.drugsandalcoholni.info/western/*

SUPPORT GROUPS

• **Al-Anon**, supports anyone whose life is, or has been affected by someone else's drinking, regardless of whether that person is still drinking or not. Telephone 02890 682368 or see *www.al-anonuk.org.uk/*

• **Alcoholics Anonymous**, telephone 02890 351222 or see *www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie*

• **Gamblers Anonymous**, telephone Derry/L'Derry – 07999977326 and Omagh – 02880 761925 – *gamblersanonymous.org.uk*

• **Narcotics Anonymous**, email contact@nanorthernireland.com or telephone 0781 0172991.

TELEPHONE HELPLINES

• **Addiction NI** is an alcohol and drug treatment charity that provides counselling, support and information in community settings across the province. Telephone 02890 664434 - *www.addictionni.com*

• **Alcoholics Anonymous**, Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am – 10pm – 0800 9177650.

• **Drinkline** is a free confidential national service for anyone concerned about their drinking or someone else's. Ring Monday to Friday 9am -8pm, Saturday and Sunday 11am – 4pm - 0300 1231110.

• **FRANK**, telephone 0300 1236600 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, text 8211 or go online to chat between 2pm – 6pm seven days a week.

WHAT HELPS GARY:

"I had lived with addiction – to alcohol and drugs – my whole adult life. So much so that I came to believe that no matter how hard I tried, there was no way out. Even when I had lost everything – my home, my dignity, and even any sense of who I was – I truly believed that this was how it was going to be, forever.

That is, until I truly accepted help; and that meant being honest (probably for the first time ever) with the people whom I had asked. For me it was the Drug and Alcohol Service, my GP, and Action Mental Health New Horizons.

There were a whole bunch of things that got me sober. But I think the most important thing I take from the recovery process is that I had to replace my addiction with positive things. For me, at the start, that meant things as simple as going for a walk, taking pride in my personal hygiene, going for a coffee with my best friend, joining a course in something I enjoyed. And not just as a one-off, but regularly. I made a daily planner and marked things in that I would do. Soon I found that my little planner had more and more "to-dos". I had structure. I had a reason to get up in the morning.

Now I am living in recovery; and although it hasn't been an easy journey, I can honestly say I am finding a kind of peace with myself; and really, that's all I was ever really searching for."

ANXIETY

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, worry or fear. Everyone feels anxious at some point in their life, usually while coping with stressful events or changes, but for some people it can be an ongoing problem, and can affect their ability to live life as fully as they want to. For example, it may be a problem if the feelings are very strong or last for a long time; fears or worries are out of proportion to the situation and are hard to control; or someone avoids situations that might cause them to feel anxious. Anxiety is also a symptom of certain conditions, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), social anxiety disorder or panic disorder.

INFORMATION

• **Mind's** website has user-friendly information on anxiety disorders including PTSD, symptoms, causes, treatments, self-care and advice for family and friends as well as personal stories from people who live with anxiety - *www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/anxiety-and-panic-attacks/#.Wobsq7cadA4*

• **NHS Choices** has a searchable A-Z list of conditions including Anxiety disorders such as general anxiety disorder, panic disorder and agoraphobia. You can find information, advice and details of what treatments are available - *www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Pages/hub.aspx*

• **No Panic** provide support for people who suffer from panic attacks, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorders and other related anxiety disorders, as well as support for the carers of people with anxiety disorders. Telephone 0844 9674848, 10am – 10pm, 365 days a year - *www.nopanic.org.uk*

• The **Royal College of Psychiatrist's** website explains what anxiety, panic and phobias are, what help is available and ways to help yourself - *www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsanddisorders/anxiety,panicandphobias.aspx*

TELEPHONE HELPLINES AND SUPPORT GROUPS

• **Anxiety Alliance** is run by former anxiety sufferers whose aim is to provide guidance to help you help yourself overcome your anxiety problems. As well as factsheets and self-help booklets, they provide telephone and online support self-help groups, and a telephone helpline which is available from 10am to 10pm every day on 0345 296 7877 - *www.anxietyalliance.org.uk*

• **Anxiety UK's** Infoline service is operated by a team of dedicated volunteers and staff, many of whom have personal experience of anxiety, stress or anxiety based depression and can offer practical advice and information on support services that are available.

They can be contacted on 03444 775 774 or 0333 212 5820, Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 5.30pm, by text on 07537 416 905, by email on support@anxietyuk.org.uk, or via live chat on their website – *www.anxietyuk.org.uk*

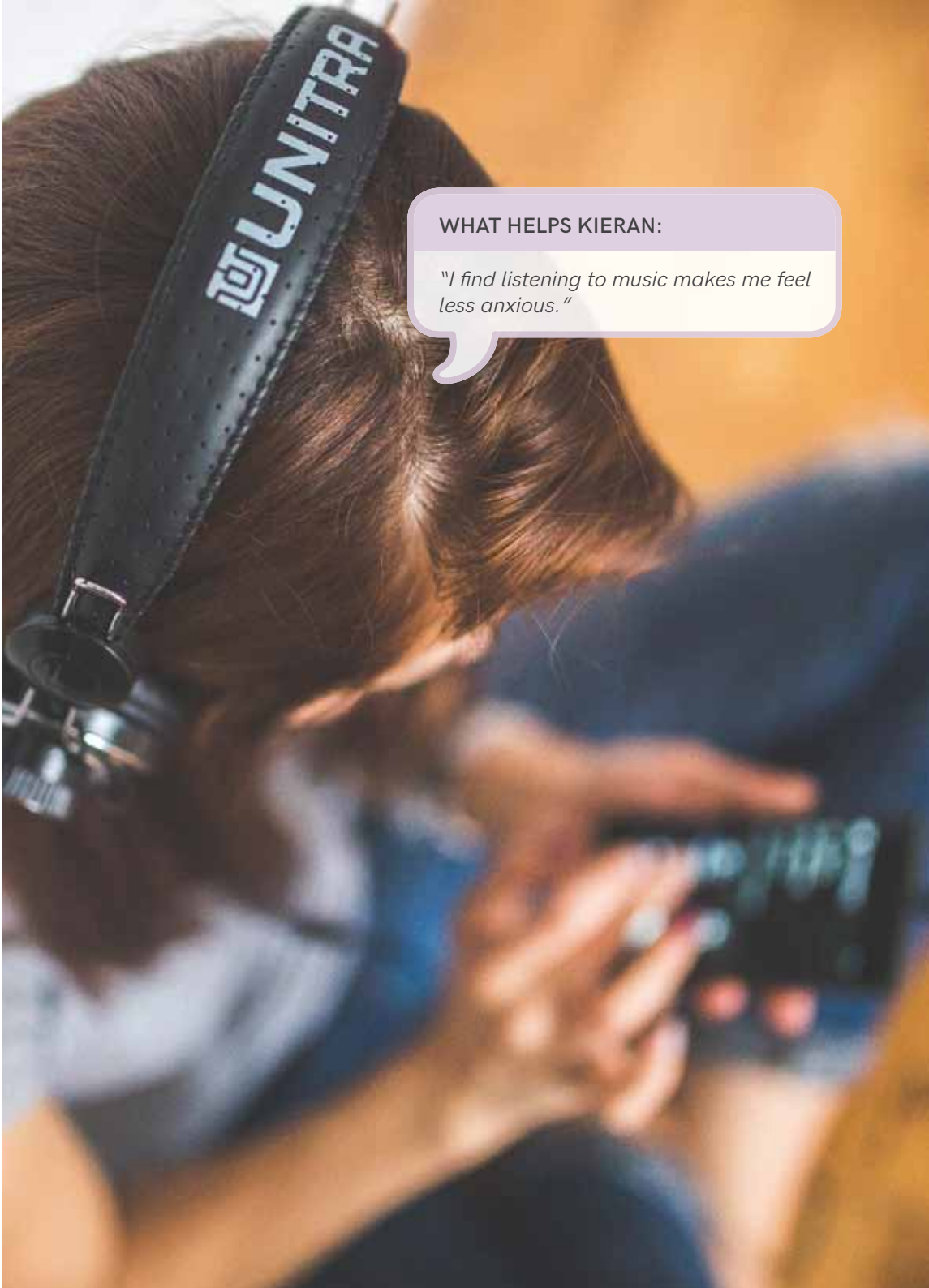
• **Combat Stress** run a free helpline for former servicemen and women and deal with issues like trauma, anxiety, depression and PTSD – call 0800 1381619 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – *www.combatstress.org.uk*

WHAT HELPS SHARON:

"I find taking time to rest is really important, and doing things that I enjoy. It gives me a break from my mind constantly racing with negative thoughts. A routine of keeping busy also helps. I like to plan my days because it helps keeps me focused on what I'm doing and distracted from my thoughts."

WHAT HELPS WILLIAM:

"I practice breathing techniques to help me calm down. If I feel anxious or worried I take a walk, or make a point of meeting up with other people. It's about keeping my mind occupied – even housework helps!"



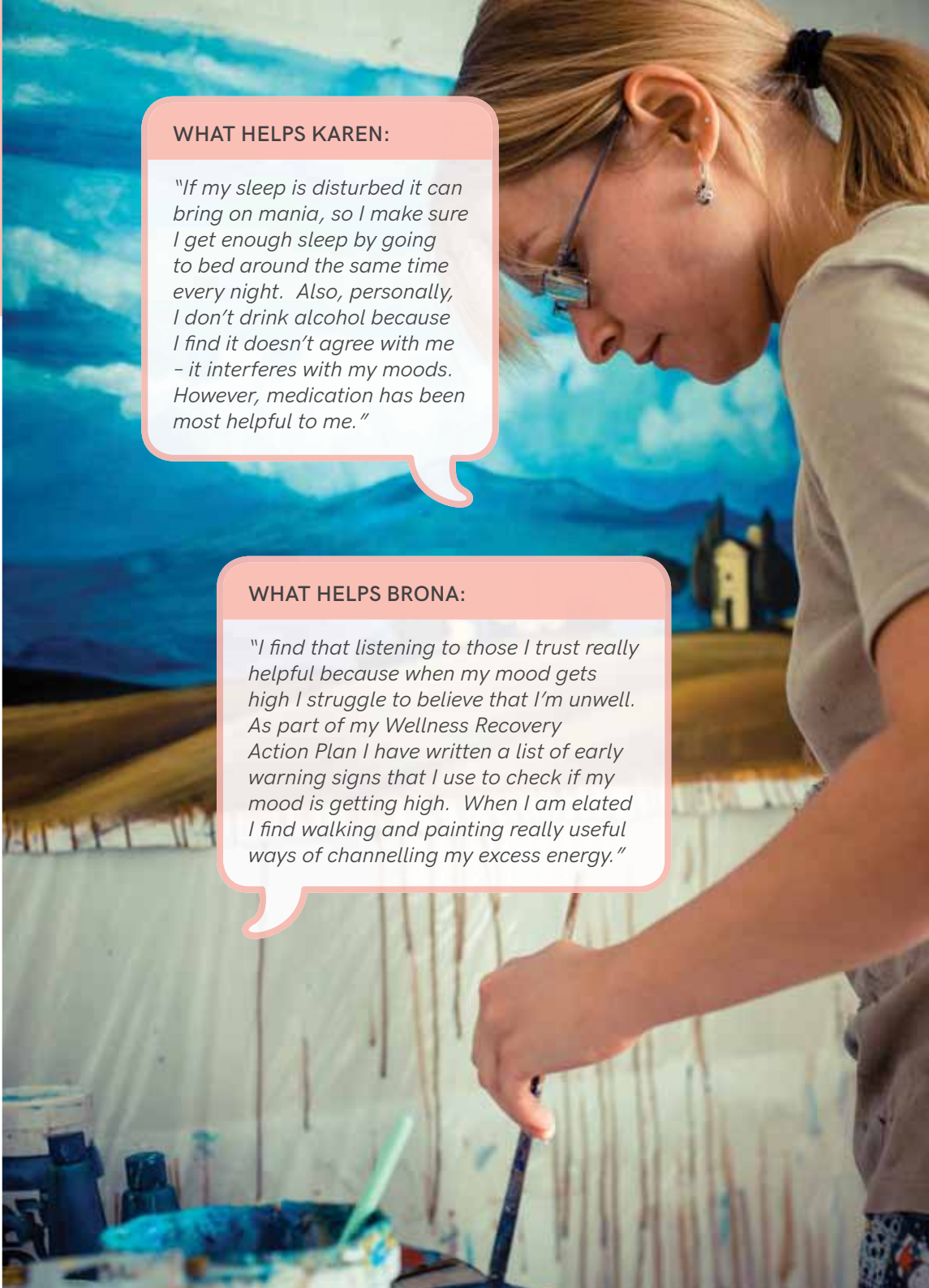
WHAT HELPS KIERAN:

"I find listening to music makes me feel less anxious."

BIPOLAR

Bipolar, which has previously been known as manic depression is fairly common, and one person in every 100 adults will be diagnosed with the condition at some point in their life. Bipolar affects your moods, which can range from extreme highs (mania) to extreme lows (depression). The duration of these moods vary in length and are interspersed with a more balanced mood. Someone experiencing mania may not be aware at the time and the person may describe feeling 'on top of the world'. They may have lots of energy, be full of ambitious ideas, overspend, talk more quickly, be more easily irritated and sleep less. The pattern of mood swings in bipolar disorder varies widely between people - some people only have a couple of bipolar episodes in their lifetime and are stable in between, while others have many episodes. There are several options for treating bipolar most of which include the use of medication, and lifestyle changes which can make a huge difference.

For further information on coping with the extreme lows of bipolar, please see our section on depression and low mood.



WHAT HELPS KAREN:

"If my sleep is disturbed it can bring on mania, so I make sure I get enough sleep by going to bed around the same time every night. Also, personally, I don't drink alcohol because I find it doesn't agree with me – it interferes with my moods. However, medication has been most helpful to me."

WHAT HELPS BRONA:

"I find that listening to those I trust really helpful because when my mood gets high I struggle to believe that I'm unwell. As part of my Wellness Recovery Action Plan I have written a list of early warning signs that I use to check if my mood is getting high. When I am elated I find walking and painting really useful ways of channelling my excess energy."

INFORMATION

• The **Royal College of Psychiatrists'** website has information on what bipolar disorder is, ways of coping and some of the available treatments - *www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsanddisorders/bipolardisorder.aspx*

• **Mind's** website provides user friendly information on bipolar as well as printable resources giving helpful guidance on how to manage and live well with the condition. There are also short video clips of personal recovery stories - *www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/bipolar-disorder/bipolar-moods-symptoms/#.Wp6prLcadA4*

• **NHS Choices** has information, advice and details of what treatments are available - *www.nhs.uk/conditions/Bipolar-disorder/*

SUPPORT GROUPS AND ONLINE SUPPORT

• **Aware** runs support groups for people who experience depression or bipolar. These are held in Coleraine, Derry/L'Derry, Enniskillen, Omagh and Strabane. Telephone 02871 260602 for information - *www.aware-ni.org/support-groups/*

• **Bipolar UK** is a national charity dedicated to supporting individuals with bipolar, their families and carers. They meet once a month in Coleraine, Belfast and Newtownabbey. They also run a telephone support line Monday to Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm, on 0333 323 3880. Support and information can also be accessed 24 hours a day via email by contacting info@bipolaruk.org or through their moderated online support community - *www.bipolaruk.org*

• **Elefriends** (run by MIND) and the Black Dog Tribe (run by SANE) are online communities where people who have mental health or emotional wellbeing issues can talk and share their experiences in a safe, non-judgemental environment - *www.elefriends.org.uk* and *www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/bdt*

DEPRESSION & LOW MOODS

We can all experience low mood from time to time where we feel sad, anxious, worried and irritable. These are normal responses to the ups and downs of life and usually pass, however if it continues for more than several weeks and starts to impact on your sleep, appetite, relationships etc. it could be a sign of depression. Depression and low mood are treatable and there are things that can help. Talking to someone is the first step.

INFORMATION

• **The Mental Health Foundation's** guide to depression has information on the signs, symptoms and types of depression, as well as how to get help - *www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/d/depression*

• **Mind** provide information on symptoms, causes, self-care, treatments, advice for friends and family, and inspirational recovery stories on their website - *www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/depression/#.WtW0GbepVLM*

• The **Royal College of Psychiatrists'** website has dedicated information on depression, antidepressants, depression in men, older people, children and young people, and postnatal depression, and offers practical advice and guidance - *www.rcpsych.ac.uk/expertadvice/problemsdisorders/depression.aspx*

• **Sane's** website has free, printable detailed information sheets about common mental health conditions, their causes, symptoms and treatment options including depression. They also have information for family, friends and carers, and an overview of talking treatments - *www.sane.org.uk/resources/mental_health_conditions/*

• The **Western Health and Social Care Trust's** website has information on the services they provide for people with mental health conditions, including depression and low mood - *www.westerntrust.hscni.net/services/2023.htm*

MENTAL HEALTH ORGANISATIONS

• **Action Mental Health (AMH)** and **Action Mental Health New Horizons** were set up to positively change the lives of those living with mental ill-health, and run programmes such as personal development, vocational skills training, and accredited employment courses, as well as offering the opportunity to take part in social and recreational activities. In the Western Trust area they operate in the Fermanagh and Foyle districts, and their services can be accessed

by self, carer, or health professional referral. They can be contacted on 02866 323630 (Fermanagh) and 02871 373502 (Foyle) - *www.amh.org.uk/*

• **Inspire Mental Health** provides community-based support in the Western Trust area to people who have had experience of mental illness, including depression and low mood. Their services include supported housing, day and floating support which can be accessed through referral by a health professional. You can also find printable information sheets on mental health conditions on their website. They can be contacted on 02890 328474 - *www.inspirewellbeing.org/mentalhealth*

SUPPORT GROUPS AND ONLINE SUPPORT

• **Aware Defeat Depression** runs support groups in Coleraine, Derry/L'Derry, Enniskillen, Omagh and Strabane. Telephone 02871 260602 - *www.aware-ni.org/support-groups/*

• **Elefriends** (run by MIND) and the Black Dog Tribe (run by SANE) are online communities where people who have mental health or emotional wellbeing issues can talk and share their experiences in a safe, non-judgemental environment - *www.elefriends.org.uk* and *www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/bdt*

• **Support2gether** offers support to mothers and families affected by ante and postnatal depression in the Tyrone and Fermanagh area. Contact 07835 040086 or email info@support2gether.co.uk for further information.

TELEPHONE HELPLINES

• **Lifeline** operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and helps those who are in distress or despair. You can talk to a counsellor experienced in dealing with suicide, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression, anxiety and many other issues. Calls are free from all Northern Ireland landlines and mobiles on 0808 808 8000 - *www.lifelinehelpline.info*

• Samaritans offer a safe place for anyone to talk at any time, about anything that's troubling you, no matter how large or small the issue, including depression and low mood. They can help you explore your options, understand your problems better, or just be there to listen. Calls are *free from all UK landlines and mobiles on 116 123 - www.samaritans.org*

• **SANEline** is a national, out-of-hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers. They are open every day of the year from 4.30pm to 10.30pm on 0300 304 7000. Helpline volunteers are empathic and non-judgemental, and provide a space to talk about any aspect of your mental health, or the mental health of someone you care about - *www.sane.org.uk/home*

WHAT HELPS KATE:

"My friends help me when I am feeling depressed – their company lifts my spirits and takes my mind of things. Being around supportive people is really important."

WHAT HELPS KAREN:

"Talking about my feelings and not keeping things in is the first step. Having a structure to my day, full of activities that help me stay well, such as walking, spending time with my pet, taking exercise, cooking, going to support groups, and volunteering helps. I have positive affirmations and quotes that I use as well.

DISORDERED EATING

When someone has an eating disorder they have a distorted attitude towards food that causes them to change their eating habits and behaviour. They may become very focused on their weight, leading them to make unhealthy choices about food with damaging results to their health. Other people may feel compelled to eat large amounts of food in a short amount of time, whilst others go through periods of binging then starving, using laxatives or deliberately making themselves sick. Anyone, no matter what their gender, age or background can develop an eating disorder, and this can be a way of coping with certain feelings or situations.

INFORMATION

• **Beat** is the UK's leading eating disorder charity and provides support for anyone affected by eating disorders, giving people experiencing an eating disorder and their loved ones a place where they feel listened to, supported and empowered. As well as providing reliable information, they also run online message boards and support groups, and free telephone and email helplines - *www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk*

• **NHS Choices** – provides comprehensive information on all types of eating disorders and what help is available - *www.nhs.uk/conditions/Eating-disorders/*

• **Royal College of Psychiatrists** – expert but easy to understand evidence based advice and information for anyone who wants to know more about eating disorders - *www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/eatingdisorderskeyfacts.aspx*

• **WHSCT** - information on services that are available to people experiencing eating disorders and their loved ones in the Western Trust area - *www.westerntrust.hscni.net/services/2647.htm*

SUPPORT GROUPS

• **EDANI** runs a support group for people living with an eating disorder, and one for those friends and families caring for someone affected by an eating disorder. The groups meet on alternate months, on the 2nd Wednesday of every month, at Aware, 15 Queen St., Derry/L'derry. Telephone 02871 320165 for more information or email info@eatingdisordersni.co.uk

TELEPHONE HELPLINES

• **Beat** provide a free helpline for adults and young people offering support and information about eating disorders 365 days a year, 3pm – 10pm – 08088 010677. If you need help outside of these hours they also run an email helpline - help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk

• **The Laurence Trust** is a local charity that provides support to men living with eating disorders. Their telephone helpline is open 6.00pm – 9.00pm seven days a week - 07510 371 335. Email thelaurencetrust@hotmail.co.uk or go to ***www.thelaurencetrust.co.uk*** for more information.

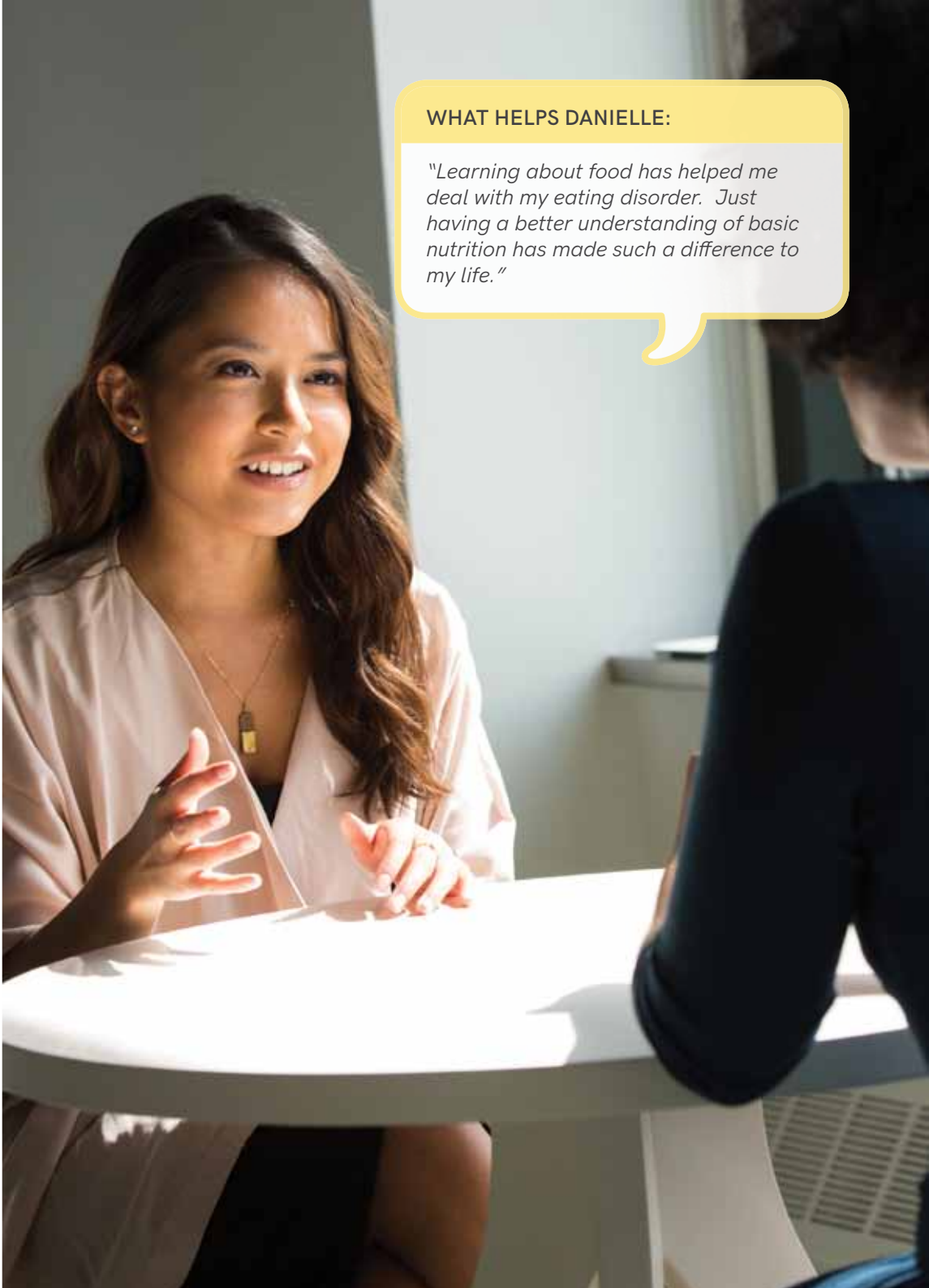
• **The Eating Disorder Association NI** (EDANI) runs a 24 hour, 7 days a week helpline for people with eating disorders, carers and professionals – 02890 235959.

WHAT HELPS NICOLA:

"If I hadn't been admitted to hospital I don't know where I'd be today. From my teenage years I've always struggled with body image, but I never thought much about food back then; it was just food – you ate it and went about your day. Fast forward 3 years and food was no longer food, but evil little numbers that filled my head at every second of the day. I was diagnosed with anorexia when I was 20 years old. Anorexia comes into your life almost like a friend encouraging you to be your "best" self, but really you end up stripped of everything, isolated and tormented.

After trying, and making a little progress, then getting stuck, I'm so thankful to now have a specialist team that includes a Therapist, Dietician, Consultant and Occupational Therapist who really believe in me. I know I have a long way to go and at this stage I am taking things day by day, however, on really tough days I have to take things minute by minute.

I am trying to be more open. No matter how hard it is to tell someone what's going on, you have to – it's the only way they can help you fight back. Thankfully I also have wonderful parents, family and friends who are there to support me and give me the extra bit of help when I need it."



WHAT HELPS DANIELLE:

"Learning about food has helped me deal with my eating disorder. Just having a better understanding of basic nutrition has made such a difference to my life."

LONELINESS

You can feel lonely because you don't get to see or talk to other people as often as you would like; or when you have lots of people around you, but you don't feel like they really understand you. Loneliness can have a negative effect on our mental and emotional wellbeing, and it's also bad for our physical health.

Although it might not feel easy, there are things you can do to help yourself feel better. Mind, the mental health charity recommends taking the time to think about what is making you lonely – is it that you don't have enough social interaction, or that you don't feel cared for or understood by those around you?

When you have your answer you can start to think about what to do next, such as making new connections with people who share the same interests as you, perhaps by volunteering at your local animal shelter, joining your local men's shed or knit and natter group.

SUPPORT GROUPS

If you feel isolated because of a mental health condition there are many support groups where you can meet up with people who have had similar experiences and can perhaps understand your particular situation.

• **Aware** runs support groups in Coleraine, Derry/L'Derry, Enniskillen, Omagh and Strabane. Telephone 028 9035 7820 or see online at *www.aware-ni.org/support-groups/*

• **Carers NI** know that being a carer can sometimes be a lonely and isolating experience. They keep an up-to-date register of the various carers support groups in the Western Trust area. They can be contacted on 028 9043 9843.

• **Carers UK's** online community is a place where you can share what's on your mind, day and night; talk about real issues with people who understand and can support you - *www.carersuk.org*

• **Elefriends** and the **Black Dog Tribe** are online communities where people who have mental health or emotional wellbeing issues can talk and share their experiences in a safe, non-judgemental environment – *www.elefriends.org.uk* and *www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/bdt*

• The **Marie Curie Community** is an online forum where anyone affected by a terminal illness can find or offer support through shared experiences - *www.community.mariecurie.org.uk*

TELEPHONE HELPLINES

Loneliness can become an issue as people get older, especially due to the loss of friends and loved ones. Sight and hearing difficulties can create also physical barriers that may lead to isolation.

• **Silverline** provides telephone and letter friendship schemes where they match volunteers with older people based on their interests and help to connect people with

services in their area – Telephone 0800 4 70 80 90, or see online at *www.thesilverline.org.uk*

• **Good Morning Omagh/Roe Valley/Strabane/Chit Chat** are free telephone befriending services for older and/or vulnerable people. They operate Monday to Friday to say a friendly hello, and offer general advice and friendship. Tel. Irvinestown – 02868 628741; Omagh - 02882 240772; Roe Valley – 02877 762303; Strabane 02871 883102.

VOLUNTEERING

• The **WHSCT** welcomes volunteers from all walks of life, from different backgrounds, and ages. Telephone 028 7161 1155 for more information.

• **Volunteer Centres** provide information on opportunities in your area and can put you in touch with a local group that needs your help. Tel. Enniskillen – 07850 851824; Limavady – 02877 765438; North West – 02871 271017; Omagh – 02882 240772; Strabane – 02871 381800.

WHAT HELPS CLAIRE:

"I have been lonely for years even though I have lots of family and friends. This was until I went to the Recovery College. As soon as I walked in the door I felt truly at home and understood. I went nowhere, done nothing, just hid in the house. Now I'm confident enough to drive, go to town and of course attend the Recovery College! It has changed my life."

LOSS

Death is an inevitable part of life, and sooner or later we all lose someone close to us. Grieving is the emotional process we go through when we are bereaved and while it is of course painful, it is nonetheless a necessary and natural part of healing. There is support available to help you come to terms with your loss.

INFORMATION

• **Child Bereavement UK's** website provides easy to understand information and advice on how to support children and young people through the grieving process, and also has resources for adults who are grieving – *www.childbereavementuk.org*

• The **HSC Bereavement Network's** website has been developed to provide information and guidance for those who care for and support dying people and their loved ones around the time of and after death - *www.hscbereavementnetwork.hscni.net/*

• **NHS Choices** provides information on how children, young people and adults can cope with bereavement – *www.nhs.uk/livewell/bereavement/Pages/bereavement.aspx*

• The **Royal College of Psychiatrists'** website has expert advice for anyone who has been bereaved, their family and friends, and anyone else who wants to know more - *www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/bereavement.aspx*

• The **Western Health and Social Care Trust's** website has downloadable guides on living and coping with bereavement, how to talk with and support children, and dealing with sudden death - *www.westerntrust.hscni.net/services/1618.htm*

SUPPORT GROUPS

• **Bereaved by Suicide Support Group Fermanagh** meets the first Monday of every month in the Aisling Centre, Enniskillen. Telephone 02866 382000 for information.

• **Bereaved by Suicide Support Group Omagh**, meets the first Tuesday of every month in the Tara Centre, Omagh. Telephone 07879 414385 for more information.

• **North West Bereaved by Suicide** provides a space to meet with others bereaved by suicide for support. The group meets the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month in Foyle Search and Rescue HQ, 20 Victoria Road, Derry/L'Derry. Email foylerescue@gmail.com or telephone 028 7131 3800 for more information.

TELEPHONE HELPLINES

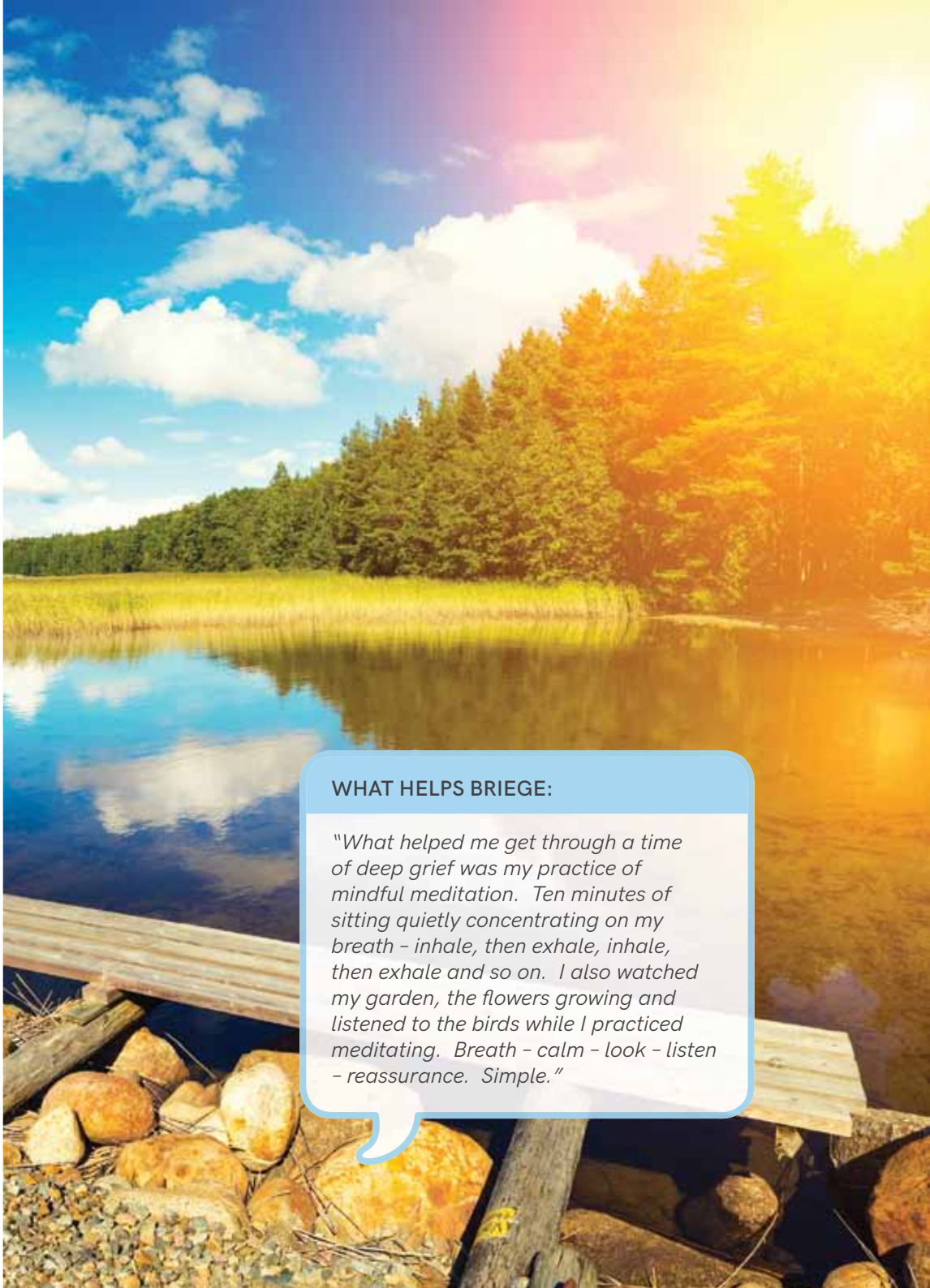
• **The Bereavement Trust's** helpline operates 365 days a year and offers comfort, support and practical advice to the bereaved. Telephone 0800 435 455, 6pm – 10pm - *www.bereavement-trust.org.uk*

• **The Blue Cross Pet Bereavement Support Service** provides emotional support and information to anyone affected by the loss, or anticipated loss, of a pet or assistance animal. Telephone 0800 0966606, 8.30am – 8.30pm, 365 days of the year - *www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-bereavement-support*

• **The Child Death Helpline** is staffed by volunteers who are themselves bereaved parents, provides support not only at times of crisis but also for the ongoing needs of callers, who may be parents, other family members, friends, or professionals. Telephone 0800 282 986, 10am – 1pm Monday to Friday, and 7pm – 10pm everyday – *www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk*

• **Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide** is a self-help organisation that provides a safe, environment where people can share their feelings and gain support from each other. Telephone 0300 111 5065, 9am - 9pm Monday to Friday - *www.uksobs.org*

• **Winston's Wish** run a free UK-wide helpline offering support, information and guidance to all those caring for a child or young person who has been bereaved. It is staffed by people with extensive experience of supporting bereaved children and their families – telephone 08088 020 021, Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm - *www.winstonswish.org*



WHAT HELPS BRIEGE:

"What helped me get through a time of deep grief was my practice of mindful meditation. Ten minutes of sitting quietly concentrating on my breath – inhale, then exhale, inhale, then exhale and so on. I also watched my garden, the flowers growing and listened to the birds while I practiced meditating. Breath – calm – look – listen – reassurance. Simple."

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

• **Cruse** offers face-to-face, telephone, email and website support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies. For information on specific services in Omagh/Fermanagh email omagh@cruse.org.uk or telephone 02882 244414, and for the Foyle area email foyle@cruse.org.uk or telephone 02871 262941. Their UK-wide bereavement care helpline can be contacted Monday – Friday 9.30am – 5pm on 0808 8081677 - *www.cruse.org.uk/northern-ireland*

• **The Miscarriage Association** is there to help anyone who has been affected by miscarriage, molar pregnancy or ectopic pregnancy. They provide information online, have an online support forum, and a telephone helpline available 9am – 4pm Monday – Friday on 01924 200799. Email info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk or see online at *www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk*

• **Youth Life** offers a variety of support to children, young people and their families going through bereavement, separation, divorce or the loss of a significant person. Telephone 02871 377 227, email info@youthlife.org or Drop in to 23 Bishop Street, Derry/L'Derry - *www.youthlife.org*

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is an illness which has three parts - the thoughts that make you anxious (obsessions); the anxiety you feel; and the things you do to reduce your anxiety (compulsions). It can develop as early as childhood, and stressful life events can lead to people developing OCD as a coping strategy.

It can be very distressing, emotional draining and time consuming. Examples of compulsions include checking, washing or other rituals with the intention of relieving anxiety. There's nothing to feel ashamed or embarrassed about and there are ways to get help.

WHAT HELPS JULIE:

"My OCD involves me performing a ritual of washing my hands. I know it is anxiety and fear of the unknown that triggers it. What helps me is distraction, so I read, watch TV, meditate, practice relaxation and mindfulness – just slowing down my breathing, emptying my mind of thoughts and focusing on the quietness around me. Sometime prayer helps."

INFORMATION

• As well as information and advice, **Mind's** website has personal stories and self-help strategies - *www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/about-ocd/#.Wkusrk9vjcs*

• **NHS Choice's** has reliable and easy to understand information on the symptoms and treatments for OCD- *www.nhs.uk/conditions/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/*

• The **Royal College of Psychiatrist's** website clearly explains what OCD is and what treatments are available, and how you can help yourself - *www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsanddisorders/obsessivecompulsivedisorder.aspx*

TELEPHONE HELPLINES AND SUPPORT GROUPS

• **OCD Action** provides support to anyone affected by OCD through a support group in Belfast, online forums, email support, and a telephone helpline. They also have a comprehensive information section for anyone wanting to know more about OCD. Email support@ocdaction.org.uk or telephone 0845 3906232 - *ocdaction.org.uk*

• **OCD UK** is a patient led charity dedicated to improving the mental health and well-being of people whose lives are affected by OCD. They run a moderated community support forum for people to communicate with each other for advice, information and support. Email support@ocduk.org or telephone 03332 127890 - *ocduk.org*

WHAT HELPS SHARON:

"I find that talking out loud to someone about my OCD really helps because it makes me realise how irrational it sounds and that I can't control the uncontrollable. Sometimes I'll try and not carry out the compulsion to prove to myself that nothing bad will happen."

PSYCHOSIS

Psychosis is where you perceive or interpret things differently from those around you. This may involve hallucinations or delusions. Hallucination is a term used to describe where a person hears, sees and in some cases, feels, smells or tastes things that aren't there; the most common one is hearing voices. Delusions are where a person has strong beliefs that aren't shared by others; the most common one is believing there is a conspiracy against you. You may not be aware that anything is wrong at the time and it's only after the experience that things will start to make sense again. The treatment for psychosis usually involves medication and support from mental health services. Whilst there is no single cause for psychosis and it can be a confusing or frightening experience, it is treatable.

INFORMATION

• **Mind's** website has information and advice, and free downloadable resources and personal recovery stories - *www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/psychosis/treatment-and-support/#.Wk9XO09vjcs*

• **NHS Choices** has a searchable A-Z list of conditions including psychosis. You can find information, advice and details of what treatments are available – *www.nhs.uk/conditions/psychosis/*

• **Rethink's** website provides clear information on what psychosis is as well as treatment options, and useful information for carers, friends and relatives - *www.rethink.org/diagnosis-treatment/conditions/psychosis*

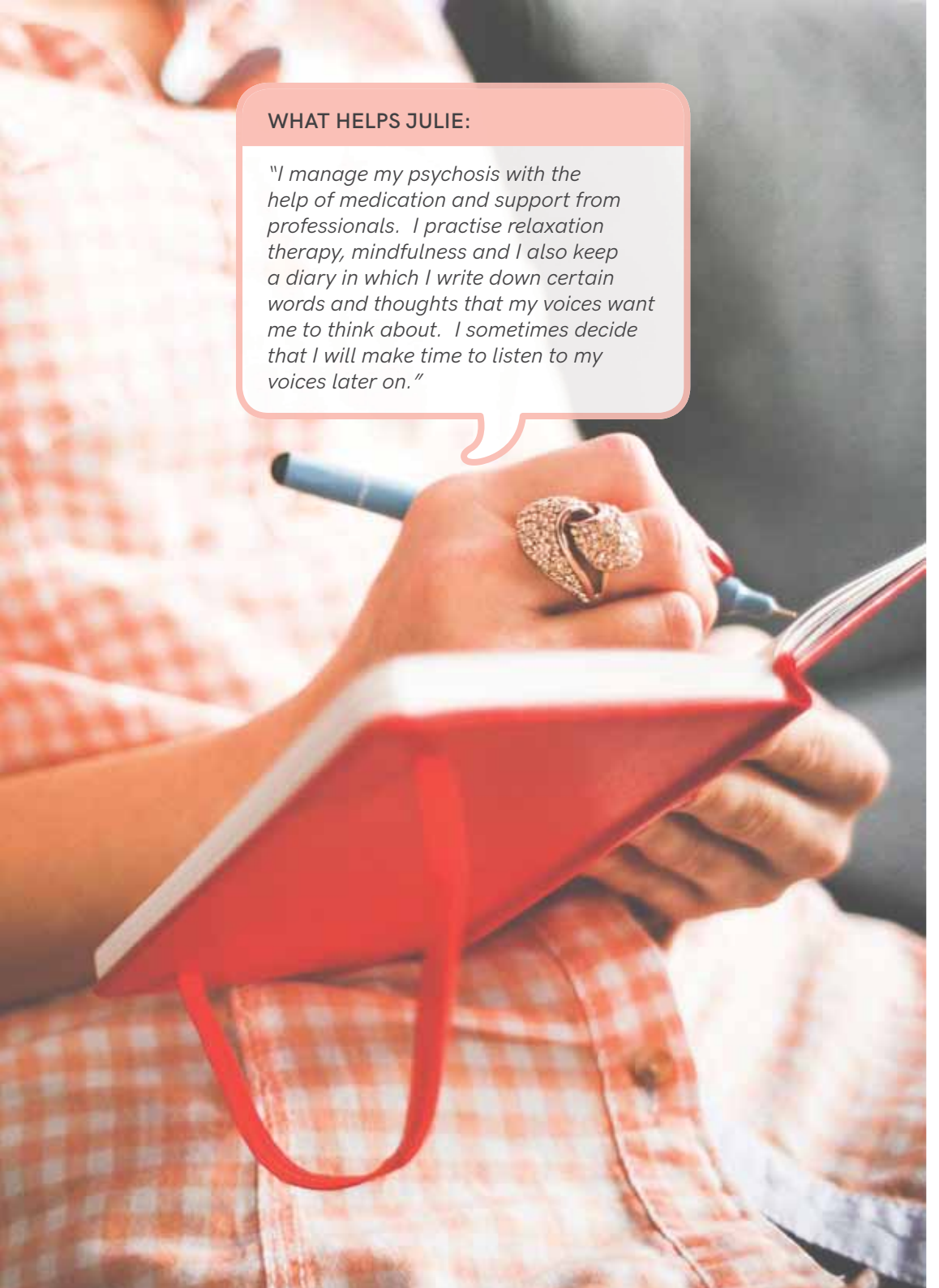
• The **Royal College of Psychiatrist's** website explains what psychosis is, has printable leaflets and advice on what help is available and ways to help yourself - *www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/parentsandyoungpeople/parentscarers/psychosis.aspx*

• Use the **Choice and Medication** website to answer common questions about mental health conditions and medications, including psychosis and medications used in the treatment of psychosis - *www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni*

SUPPORT GROUPS & ONLINE COMMUNITIES

• **Action on Post-Partum Psychosis** offers a moderated online peer support forum for mothers and partners as well as information guides and personal recovery stories - *www.app-network.org*

• **Intervoice** is a UK based charity with international links providing an online forum that aims to spread positive and hopeful messages about the experience of hearing voices through connecting people and sharing ideas - *www.intervoiceonline.org*



WHAT HELPS JULIE:

"I manage my psychosis with the help of medication and support from professionals. I practise relaxation therapy, mindfulness and I also keep a diary in which I write down certain words and thoughts that my voices want me to think about. I sometimes decide that I will make time to listen to my voices later on."

• **Support2gether** offers support to mothers and families affected by ante and postnatal depression in the Tyrone and Fermanagh area. Contact 07835040086 or email info@support2gether.co.uk for further information.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION

• **Hearing-voices.org** is a charity committed to helping people who hear voices. They want to support anyone with these experiences to understand, learn and grow from them in their own way. Email info@hearing-voices.org or telephone 0114 2718210.

WHAT HELPS ANNE:

"Educating myself about my condition, and what things I can do to help myself by attending courses at the Recovery College has helped me to manage my symptoms. The Wellness Recovery Action Plan was especially useful to me."

WHAT HELPS HAZEL:

"Acceptance; learning about my diagnosis; hearing from other people so that I know I am not alone; coming to the Recovery College; and working together with healthcare professionals have all helped me to manage my psychosis."

SELF HARM

Self-harm is when you intentionally hurt yourself as a way of dealing with difficult and painful feelings, or overwhelming situations. All ages, and both men and women can be affected, and people can have very different reasons or triggers for self-harming. Although self-harm can seem to provide a temporary feeling of relief, it can become addictive itself, and the underlying cause of the distress remains. People who self-harm aren't necessarily suicidal but it can be a way of coping with suicidal thoughts. Whilst it is challenging there is help and support available.

INFORMATION

• **Harmless** is a national organisation for people who self-harm, their friends, families and professionals. They have a number of factsheets, leaflets and other materials designed to help people who self-harm, their friends and families and people who work in this area – *www.harmless.org.*

• **LifeSIGNS** is a user led charity that aims to create understanding about self-injury and to guide people who hurt themselves towards new ways of coping, when they're ready for the journey. Their website has very good information for people who self-harm as well as factsheets for parents, friends, teachers, men and anyone else affected by self-harm, and also run a moderated online support forum – *www.lifesigns.org.uk*

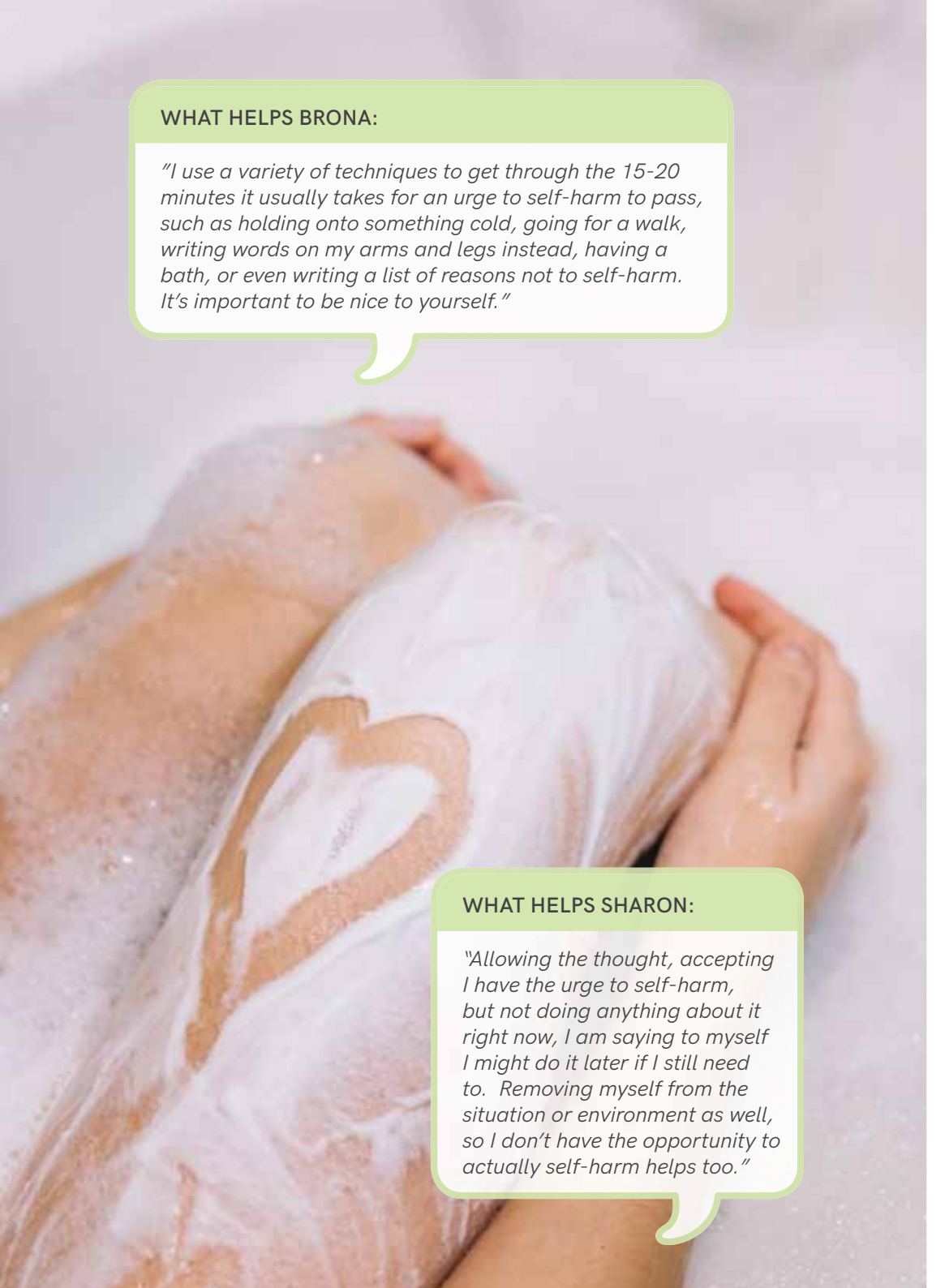
• **MIND's** website has clear easy to understand information on self-harm, personal recovery stories, self-help, and guidance for friends and families - *www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/self-harm/#.WjvYUrcafVI*

• **NHS Choices** has information on the different types of self-harm, why people self-harm and how to get help - *www.nhs.uk/conditions/self-harm*

• The **Royal College of Psychiatrist's** website has information for anyone who wants to know more about self-harm, particularly anyone who is harming themselves, or feels that they might, as well as helpful advice for friends and families - *www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/self-harm.aspx*

TELEPHONE HELPLINES & ONLINE SUPPORT

• **Lifeline** is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and calls are answered by trained counsellors who can provide help and support on a range of mental health issues, including self-harm. Calls are free from all landlines, and most mobiles – 0808 808 8000.



WHAT HELPS BRONA:

"I use a variety of techniques to get through the 15-20 minutes it usually takes for an urge to self-harm to pass, such as holding onto something cold, going for a walk, writing words on my arms and legs instead, having a bath, or even writing a list of reasons not to self-harm. It's important to be nice to yourself."

WHAT HELPS SHARON:

"Allowing the thought, accepting I have the urge to self-harm, but not doing anything about it right now, I am saying to myself I might do it later if I still need to. Removing myself from the situation or environment as well, so I don't have the opportunity to actually self-harm helps too."

• **The National Self-Harm Network** runs a monitored online forum that provides crisis support, information and resources, advice, discussions and distractions for people who self-harm - *www.nshn.co.uk*

• **Samaritans** is a charity that provides support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of self-harm or suicide. Call them free, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, from any phone on 116 123. You can also email jo@samaritans.org

• **Self-Injury Support** was set up to provide support to women who self-harm. As well as information and advice on their website, they also offer a free Self-injury Helpline (0808 8008088, Tuesday to Thursday, 7pm – 9.30pm); text support (0780 0472908, Tuesday to Thursday, 7pm – 9.30pm); and email support via their website – *www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk*

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

• **The Niamh Louise Foundation** was set up to provide a safe environment where anyone can drop in to chat about worrying thoughts, thoughts of suicide and/or self-harm. Based in Dungannon, they offer a range of services which include a youth group, complementary therapies, befriending (for over 18s), mentoring (for under 18s), counselling services and bereavement support. Their services can be accessed by self-referral, by contacting them on 028 8775 3327, Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm, email info@niamhlouisefoundation.com - *www.niamhlouisefoundation.com/*

• **Zest** have premises in Derry/L'Derry and Omagh and they provide individual counselling and support for people who self-harm, and their families and carers, and run a Self-Harm Intervention Programme (SHIP). Their services can be accessed through your GP or by contacting them directly on 02871 266999, Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm, email zest@zestni.co.uk – *www.zestni.org*

SLEEP DISTURBANCES

Insomnia is difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep long enough to feel refreshed the next day. It can last for a short period, for example when you are feeling more stressed than usual, or it can become a longer term problem. However there are some things you can do to help yourself.

Think about what could be causing your insomnia, things such as:

- Stress and worry
- Certain medication and physical health conditions
- Pain
- Depression/anxiety or other mental health issues
- Lifestyle factors such alcohol, caffeine, shift work, or your sleeping environment.

When you have identified the possible causes you can begin to think about making changes. Your GP can provide help and advice on physical and mental health issues.

WHAT HELPS BERNADETTE:

"Cutting out caffeine after 12noon and drinking red bush tea instead, as well as turning off my laptop a few hours before bedtime, had the biggest impact for me. I get sleepier and go to bed earlier than before, and while I still wake during the night, it's less often and I can get back to sleep more quickly – my brain is more able to switch-off than before."

INFORMATION

• **Be Mindful** from the Mental Health Foundation, provides everything you need to know about mindfulness and has a free trial of their online mindfulness course - *www.bemindful.co.uk*

• **The British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association** is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping snorers and their bed partners improve their sleep. They also have a moderated online forum which offers advice and support. Telephone 0800 085 1097 – *www.britishsnoring.co.uk/*

• **NHS Choices** provides easy to understand information and advice on all aspects of insomnia, including a sleep self-assessment - *www.nhs.co.uk/conditions/insominia*

• **Mental Health Foundation** has information on common sleep disorders, treatments and self-help strategies, and free relaxation podcasts - *www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/s/sleep*

• **The Sleep Council** – information on how everyone can adopt healthier sleep habits, helpful advice and tips on how to improve sleep quality from children, teens through to adults and how to create the perfect sleep environment – *www.sleepcouncil.org.uk*

• **Steps for Stress** – has information on reducing stress, what you can do to help yourself sleep better, and free downloads of relaxation and breathing exercises - *www.stepsforstress.org*

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Suicidal thoughts and feelings are very common – many people have thought about suicide at some point in their lives. There is no single reason why someone might try to take their own life. It can be the result of the worsening of a mental health condition; because of experiencing intense feelings of distress or anxiety about a life event; or that the pain of living the life you have is too much to bear and that suicide seems like the only option.

However, while it is undoubtedly difficult to believe in a time of crisis, people who are feeling suicidal are not beyond help.

At these times it is ***extremely important*** to seek help :

- By talking to someone you trust.
- Contacting Lifeline free on 0808 808 8000, or Samaritans free on 116 123.
- Going to the Urgent Care Department at Omagh Hospital - 02882 833169.
- Going to your nearest A&E Department: Altnagelvin – 02871 345171, or South West Acute Hospital – 02866 382000.
- Contacting your GP for an emergency appointment or the GP Out of Hours Service on 02871 865195.
- Contacting the emergency services by calling 999 or 112.

INFORMATION

• **Aware Defeat Depression's** website has printable factsheets on a range of mental health topics including suicide - *www.aware-ni.org/factsheets/*

• **Mind's** website has information for people who are feeling suicidal, including ways to cope in the short and longer term, where to get help, recovery stories, and advice for those who are concerned about someone else who may be suicidal - *www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/suicidal-feelings/#.WplnxbcadA5*

TELEPHONE HELPLINES & ONLINE SUPPORT

• **CALM** is a charity dedicated to preventing male suicide. From 5pm – 12midnight every day they offer confidential, anonymous and free support, information and signposting to men anywhere in the UK through their webchat service. Chats are taken by trained staff who are there to listen, support, inform and signpost. They also have a free UK-wide telephone helpline – 0800 58 58 58 open 5pm – 12 midnight - *www.thecalmzone.net*

• **HOPEline UK** is a specialist telephone helpline run by Papyrus the UK wide charity dedicated to the prevention of suicide in young people. They provide non-judgemental support, practical advice and information to children, teenagers and young people up to the age of 35, and anyone concerned about a young person. They can be contacted free on 0800 068 4141, Monday to Friday 10.00am – 10.00pm, Weekends 2.00pm – 10.00pm and Bank Holidays 2.00pm – 10.00pm - Text 07786 209697 - Email pat@papyrus-uk.org - *www.papyrus-uk.org*

• **Lifeline** is a crisis response helpline service operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you're in distress or despair, you can talk to a counsellor experienced in dealing with suicide, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression, anxiety and many other issues. Calls are free from all Northern Ireland landlines and mobiles on 0808 808 8000 - *www.lifelinehelpline.info*

• **Samaritans** offer a safe place for anyone to talk at any time, about anything that's troubling you, no matter how large or small the issue, including if you are feeling suicidal. They can help you explore your options, understand your problems better, or just be there to listen. Calls are free from all UK landlines and mobiles on 116 123 - Email jo@samaritans.org - ***www.samaritans.org***

WHAT HELPS SEAMUS:

"Surrounding myself with people who cared for and supported me, trying to believe the positive and good things they were telling me, and holding on to the hope that things can be different, that things can change.

Accepting that I needed professional support was a turning point, even though it didn't feel like that when I was admitted to hospital. I took a chance and talked through what was happening to me and what I was feeling with the staff and they listened without judging me.

They helped me regain my hope for the future and I am now able to use my experience and talk about my recovery journey to help others going through a similar experience."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

• **The Aisling Centre** (*www.theaislingcentre.com*) provides counselling, psychotherapy and complementary therapies in a safe and welcoming space, as well as wellbeing and life learning programmes. Contact 37 Darling Street, Enniskillen, BT74 7DP, email info@theaislingcentre.com or telephone 02866 32 5811.

• **Cause** (*www.cause.org.uk*) is run by carers, for carers, and offers services to anyone caring for a loved one who experiences mental illness. Telephone 0845 6030291 Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am – 4pm, and Tuesday and Thursday 12noon – 8pm, or email info@cause.org.uk

• **Centre for Clinical Interventions** (*www.cci.health.wa.gov.au*) is an Australian Government initiative, but their website is free to use for anyone, anywhere in the world. They provide a wide range of easy to understand and use self-help resources on mental health.

• **Derry Well Women** (*www.derrywellwoman.org*) offers physical and mental health and social care services to women of all ages in a welcoming, relaxed, safe and confidential space. They deliver their services via clinics, programmes, support groups and counselling and other one-to-one services. Contact 17 Queen Street, Derry/L'Derry, BT48 7EQ, email info@derrywellwoman.org or telephone 02871 360777.

• **Get Self Help** (*www.getselfhelp.co.uk*) has free Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) resources including worksheets, information sheets and other downloadable and printable materials for a wide range of mental health issues from Anxiety to Panic to Suicidal Thoughts.

• **Inspire** (*www.inspirewellbeing.org*) provides personalised, recovery focused, community-based support for people experiencing mental ill-health. They operate in Castlederg, Derry/L'Derry, Enniskillen, Lisnaskea, and Omagh. Telephone 02890 328474 or email mentalhealth@inspirewellbeing.org

• **The Koram Centre** (*koramcentre.com*) provides professional counselling, therapy, advice, and psychotherapy for children and adolescents, individuals, couples and families. Contact 3 Mourne Villas, Strabane, BT82 8BG, email thekoramcentre@gmail.com or telephone 02871 88 6181.

• **Lust for Life** (*www.alustforlife.com*) is an Irish charity whose mission is to support, inspire, and empower people to take care of their mental health. Their site has advice and information on mental health, physical health, personal recovery stories, blogs and more.

• **The Mens Advisory Project** (*www.mapni.co.uk*) exists to provide support and counselling services for men who are experiencing domestic abuse. Telephone 02871 160001, 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday, or email info@mapni.co.uk

- **Men's Action Network** support and promote male health and wellbeing through one to one counselling, complimentary therapies and self-awareness and self-development programmes. Contact them directly at 40 Carlisle Road, Derry/Londonderry, BT48 6JW, email: man_in_derry@yahoo.co.uk. Tel: 028 71377777.

- **My Mind Western Trust** is a free App providing instant access to high quality, evidence based information on mental health & wellbeing, including services available in the Western Trust area. Free to download from any App store.

- The **Money Advice Service** (*www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk*) provides free and impartial money advice to help improve your finances; tools and calculators to help keep track and plan ahead; and support over the phone and online. Ring their free helpline on 0800 138 7777.

- **Nexus NI** (*www.nexusni.org*) provides free specialist counselling for anyone, male or female, whose life has been affected by sexual violence. Contact their Derry/L'Derry office on 02871 260566 or email Derry@nexusni.org; or their Enniskillen office on 02866 320046 or email Enniskillen@nexusni.org

- **Parenting NI** (*www.parentingni.org*) offers support for parents or carers who need support or advice with any issue relating to parenting from sleep routines to divorce. Their telephone helpline is available 10am – 12noon, Monday to Friday on 0808 8010722.

- **The Tara Centre** (*www.taraomagh.com*) offers counselling and psychotherapy, complementary therapies, support groups, and runs holistic workshops and programmes. Call in to 11 Holmview Terrace, Omagh, BT79 0AH, email info@taraomagh.com or telephone 02882 250024.

- **Towards Healing** (*towardshealing.ie*) provides support for those who have experienced abuse in Catholic Institutions in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. Telephone their free helpline on 0800 0963315, Monday – Thursday 11am – 8pm, Friday 11am – 6pm, or write to Towards Healing, PO BOX 5654, Dublin, 14.

- **The Rainbow Project** (*www.rainbow-project.org*) works to improve the physical, mental & emotional health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender people in Northern Ireland. They run personal development programmes, offer one to one and couples therapy, and family support. Contact their Foyle office at 20 Strand Road, Derry/L'Derry, email info@rainbow-project.org or telephone 02871 283030.

- **Reading Well** (*www.reading-well.org.uk*) run the Books on Prescription and Mood Boosting Books schemes, which promote the benefits of reading for mental health and wellbeing. All books can be easily found in local libraries, and include topics such as young people's mental health, self-esteem and depression and other common mental health conditions.

• **The WHSCT's Recovery College** (*www.whsct.hscni.net*) offers a wide range of free educational courses and workshops designed to promote mental wellbeing and recovery. Courses run in Derry/L'Derry, Enniskillen, Omagh and Strabane, and are open to those with mental ill-health, staff, students, carers, friends and family, and anyone with an interest in mental health and wellbeing. Courses are written and delivered jointly by those with the lived experience of mental ill-health, and mental health professionals. Term times are March to June and October to December. Telephone 02882 252079, or email olive.young@westerntrust.hscni.net

• **Relate NI** (*www.relateni.org*) provides relationship counselling for couples, families and individuals; family counselling; psycho-sexual therapy; and services for people in abusive relationships. They work in Derry/L'Derry, and Irvinestown. Email office@relateni.org or telephone 02890 323454.

• **The Rowan** (*therowan.net*) is NI's regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre is jointly funded by the DHSSPS and the PSNI and delivers a range of support and services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to children, young people, women and men who have been sexually abused, assaulted or raped, whether this happened in the past or more recently, with or without it being reported to the police. Their 24 hour helpline can be contacted on 0800 389 4424. The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre is located within the Antrim Area Hospital Complex, 45 Bush Road, Antrim, BT41 2RL.

• **Suicide or Survive** (*www.suicideorsurvive.ie*) is an Irish charity focussed on educating, informing and inspiring people to cultivate good mental health and reduce stigma leading to less death by suicide. They have a wealth of free resources on their website for anyone affected by mental health issues.

• **Victim Support** (*victimsupportni.co.uk*) provides information, practical help and emotional support for victims of crime. Their Foyle hub which covers the Western Trust area can be contacted on 02871 370086 or email foyle@victimsupportni.co.uk

• **WAVE** (*www.traumacentre.org.uk*) is a cross-community voluntary organisation that offers welfare advice, counselling and psychotherapy, advocacy and casework support, and personal development programmes for young people. They have offices in in the Western Trust Area in Derry/L'Derry – telephone 02871 266655, and Omagh – telephone 02882 252522.

• **Women's Aid** (*www.womensaidni.org*) provide a range of support services to enable women who are leaving a violent situation to rebuild their lives. Their free 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline can be contacted on 0808 8021414, and offers support and advice for all women and men who have been affected by domestic or sexual violence. You can also email 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org or text "support" to 07797 805 839.

• **Your Mental Health** (*yourmentalhealth.ie*) is a place to learn about mental health, and how to support yourself and the people you love.

DISCOVERY
RECOVERY
HOPE • CONTROL • OPPORTUNITY

Recovery College
Lisnamallard
5B Woodside Avenue
Omagh
BT79 7BP

Telephone : (028)82 252 079

HSC Public Health Agency

HSC Western Health and Social Care Trust